

Town of Georgetown -- News Article

For Immediate Release

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Georgetown Village District - 1 Historic Properties Survey Project

Thanks to a Community Preservation Committee Grant, the Georgetown Historical Commission has announced that the Town of Georgetown is presently seeking proposals from qualified Historic Preservation Consultants to undertake an intensive survey of selected cultural and architectural resources in the Town of Georgetown.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) stipulates the procedures and requirements to be used by the Town in its selection for Consultant services. The project will be divided into Four Phases, to be completed over a nine month period. (Qualified applicants contact Town Administrator, Michael Farrell) These Consultant services will provide the Georgetown Historical Commission with documentation for historic properties in the , so called, Village District area, which is centered around a point defined by the intersection of North, W. Main, E. Main and Central Streets, that includes several hundred existing historic properties. With only limited periodic funding available for this purpose, the Historic Commission is currently limiting its selection of properties (90) to be surveyed to those having an Assessors built date of 1900 or earlier. The GHC has defined and mapped a logical and contiguous area of streets and property bounds around the Village Center, to be known as Historic Village District – 1.

Georgetown's history began in 1667, when Rowley set aside 3000 acres in the western part of the Town, to be used as village grazing land. The parcel was six miles from Old Rowley and situated along the main road from Salem, Massachusetts to New Hampshire. Georgetown is fortunate that many of its homes and structures built in the early years of its settlement can still be found on most of the older roads and streets.

This survey project emerged from the Town's Master Planning process, which revealed the residents desire to preserve the historic rural scale and character of the Town, and ensure that the Town's historic integrity is maintained. According to Georgetown's Town Planner, "We are looking forward to having this Historic Village District surveyed, so we will have a firm basis on which to base future land use decisions along the adjacent Route 133 commercial corridor. Having a better understanding of Georgetown's distinct Architectural Heritage will help us make better land use decisions and preserve and strengthen the historic resources of the community."

According to the Georgetown Board of Assessors office, the town of Georgetown has over 400 historic houses that were built prior to 1900. Of this number, only 121 of them have been Documented and historically inventoried on the Massachusetts Historical Commission list of historic structures. The primary goal of the Georgetown Historical Commission is to ultimately propose a Historic District in two areas of our community (

Elm St.& Village District areas). The Massachusetts Historical Commission has suggested that we should continue our efforts by beginning our inventory of early houses in the Village Center District, prior to formally coming before the Annual Town Meeting to propose setting up the two Historic Districts.

Compiling a historic properties inventory is an essential step for Georgetown's Historical Commission, as this information will be documented on Massachusetts Historical Commission Inventory Forms and entered in their database. These Inventory Forms address the first task of Preservation Planning --- which is identification. Throughout Massachusetts, towns are struggling with the loss of their historic buildings and landscapes. There are actually a number of things that towns can do to better protect their fragile community character, including the value of a Preservation Plan. This Plan for Georgetown will greatly assist in identifying historical and cultural resources, assessing their current status, and recognizing issues and opportunities to better protect those resources.

Once the Consulting firm is selected, they will begin collecting the information already known about the Town and its early inhabitants, as well as taking photographs of the building's exterior. Over the next several months, residents and property owners who are in this area and have specific information about their properties in this Village Center area are encouraged to convey it to the Historical Commission either directly to its members (Edward Des Jardins Chair. @ 352 – 9763 or Joseph Knapp @ 352- 5806) or at its regularly scheduled mtg. held on the third Thursday of each month @ 7:30 pm in the Town Hall basement mtg. rm. Residents are invited to share any relevant documentary material they may have, such as historic photographs, scrapbooks, architectural plans, etc.

The Georgetown Historical Commission feels that this effort to document our local history, demonstrates to future generations, that we in this generations care about preserving Georgetown's rich Historical Heritage for others to enjoy as well.

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